

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This amendment is submitted with an RCE and with an Information Disclosure Statement citing references that were cited in the corresponding European application.

Reconsideration of the rejections is respectfully requested. Claim 17 has been amended in view of the rejections and in order to better define over the prior art.

There is a significant difference between the claimed invention and the prior art in that the third locking member of these prior art devices is a slender, solid dowel rod. The claimed invention uses a third tube which is forced into undersized holes. The use of undersized holes is disclosed in lines 20 to 22 on page 4 of the client's original international application.

Using a third tube with undersized holes has at least three advantages.

Firstly, the tube is more resilient and likely to withstand impacts whereas the relatively slender, solid dowel rods of the prior art are more prone to snapping.

Secondly, because the tube can compress, whereas the slender rod cannot, the undersizing causes the surrounding material to compress the tube slightly. With time this depression becomes permanent so that there is, in effect, a slight shoulder created on either side of the compressed region and the third member is therefore mechanically locked in position, as well as being locked in position by frictional forces.

Thirdly, with the third component being tubular, that component can also be pierced with another component, for example a support pin for a traffic direction notice and that support pin can itself be locked in position by inserting yet another member into the third tube.

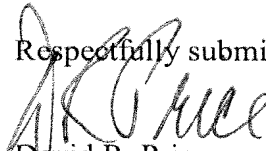
There is no way in which the slender, solid dowel rods of the prior art apparatus could be similarly pierced.

Claim 17 and dependent claims 18 through 26 therefore define over the prior art.

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Amdt. dated March 29, 2007
Reply to Office action of November 30, 2006

In view of the foregoing, entry of the above amendment and allowance of claims 17 through 26 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Price", written over the typed name.

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